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Jan 9, 2009

# Asthma

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## Causes

Asthma is probably due to a combination of environmental and genetic factors. You're more likely to develop asthma if it runs in your family and if you're sensitive to environmental allergens or irritants. Early, frequent infections and chronic exposure to secondhand smoke or certain allergens may increase your chances of developing asthma.

Exposure to various allergens and irritants may trigger your asthma symptoms. The following are common things that trigger asthma symptoms:

- Allergens, such as pollen, animal dander or mold
- Cockroaches and dust mites
- Air pollutants and irritants
- Smoke
- Strong odors or scented products or chemicals
- Respiratory infections, including the common cold
- Physical exertion, including exercise
- Strong emotions and stress
- Cold air
- Certain medications, including beta blockers, aspirin and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs
- Sulfites, preservatives added to some perishable foods
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), a condition in which stomach acids back up into your esophagus. GERD may trigger an

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asthma attack or make an attack worse.

- Sinusitis

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By Mayo Clinic Staff

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